

The Adventures Of A Cow Carpoolist

By Peggy Beals

A man who likes to keep current asks me, "So what are you health nuts up to now?" I tell him about the milk run, describing some of my adventures as part of a cow carpool at least 10 local families are sharing. He can't believe it.

We have two carpools of five families each. We take turns going to a dairy in a nearby town to buy a week's supply of milk for the families. When my turn comes, I eye the weather anxiously all week, but Friday is nice about dawning clear. I load in several crates of old fashioned glass quart milk bottles, 12 to a crate, carefully stored upside down so water won't freeze in them and break them. They are precious collectibles now and the dairy guards them jealously, buying more when they can from defunct dairies. They bear a variety of names: Socquet Farm, "Better Milk For Particular People;" White Farms, Ipswich, Mass. "Golden Guernsey;" Sunshine Creamery, Fall River; Capital Dairy, South Dartmouth; Leinerts of Darien, Conn. "Please send me home . . . I have more trips to make."

GETTING ORDERS

I go to the Cowgill's house on Forest Street to pick up more crates left there by others in our pool.

At the dairy I back up to the milk room door. The owners hurry out with cheerful greetings and help carry bottles in. They're a delightful couple, grandparents several times over, but looking years younger than they are. They credit hard work and the exercise of running a dairy.

The dairy is always busy. One person is washing bottles in boiling water while another caps filled bottles, and visitors stand around enjoying the bustle. As they wrestle the crates of filled bottles, I can admire the black-and-white Holsteins tugging at grass in the meadow and hear the hens gossiping nearby.

SOUR MILK?

My friend is amazed at this return to 'Ye Olden Times.' "Doesn't the milk get sour during the week?" I asked that before we started, having gone to the store too many times and brought back near-sour milk, good only for secondary uses. This milk doesn't. Being less than a day old to start with, it tastes just as fresh six days later, although the cream is a bit thicker. Sandy Cowgill says it's like enjoying a carrot one minute from the earth in your garden, rather than two weeks old from California. Getting a week's supply at once is so convenient, Janet Spriggs says, keeping her from running out several times a week for fresh milk.

"You said cream. You mean it isn't homogenized?" This is an important reason many of us get the milk. Nancy Butler cites several studies linking homogenized milk to America's extremely high rate of arteriosclerosis. Homogenization breaks the fat globules into such small units they can pass through the intestine walls into the bloodstream and collect in the arteries, especially around the heart. The process is also suspected of removing most Vitamin A from the milk. Janet points out it's better to get natural vitamins in the first place than have them removed and allegedly put back again by the processors.

And we like the cream for beverages and cereal.

Sally Cochrane buys extra to churn butter. Judy Mabey of Pembroke, formerly of Marshfield, makes butter and likes to watch the color changes. In winter the butter is pale, but when the cows return to grass and dandelions it turns a rich yellow. And when they get into an occasional patch of wild onions . . . !

RAW MILK

"You mentioned raw milk. Won't that give you tuberculosis?" People are amazed to



learn that raw milk can be sold when a dairy follows a regular testing program. Marilyn Dunn quotes Adelle Davis on the value of raw milk, un-tampered with by processing. Sally is interested in all raw foods, what nutritionists call the "back to nature" diet of foods that are fresh, unprocessed, uncanned or frozen, uncolored or flavoured and are free of chemical additives.

Dr. Ben Feingold's version of this diet has been known to turn hyperactive children into symptom-free, pleasant to have around kids within one week. Sally also makes yogurt from the milk, which is a natural pasteurizing process. Carol Robinson serves raw milk to friends who do not suspect that's what they are drinking.

but are sure that raw milk must taste "funny."

The flavor is another main reason for buying milk. All the families prefer the taste. Judy says her son wouldn't drink milk until she heard of this place, and with her doctor's reluctant consent tried it on him. Mary O'Sullivan of Pembroke says her husband didn't drink milk before they started this. "It doesn't taste of the plastic carton," she says. Even the skim milk is pleasing to those who want skim but don't like the store kind. The flavor is so inviting, at our house we sometimes have to label the bottles to make the generous supply last. Visitors beg for a glass of that good milk. Linda O'Callahan's children, after vacationing elsewhere, were glad to get back to "real" milk. The quart bottles are easier to handle, too, especially for little hands. Janet Spriggs thinks the milk stays colder in them.

"But all that driving to get milk, when there's plenty in town, and some milkmen still deliver. I know, it must be cheaper!" It isn't, but we think the taste, nutrition, and

convenience of having our milk delivered for four weeks is worth the few extra pennies. The route is through residential areas with little traffic, and some interesting stores, including one of those no-advertising supermarkets where things are 10 cents cheaper and they take your check cheerfully at the cash register. Youngsters love the trip, the dairy activity and the lively couple who run it. A visitor seeing the O'Callahans' bottles said they must have a milkman. "No," Laura said proudly, "a milk lady!"

It's all too unconventional for my friend, but then he's still saying, "Show me a vitamin and I'll believe in 'em." The rest of us think we're on to a very good thing. Oh, how I would love to share the name of the dairy with you, but its business is so good the couple have asked me not to reveal their name, because they have all the business they can handle. We'll gladly continue our milk run until some of our equally nutty friends start a local dairy. It looks like a sure mom-and-pop opportunity if you're not afraid of hard work.

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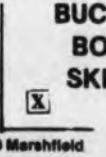
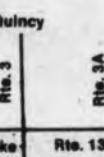
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